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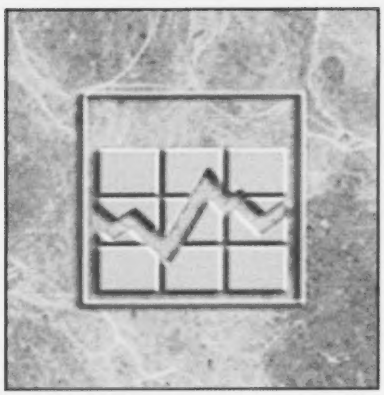
Social participation of full-time workers



by Martin Turcotte and Stéphanie Gaudet
Labour Statistics Division

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..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
p	preliminary
r	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
E	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Social participation of full-time workers

by Martin Turcotte and Stéphanie Gaudet

The individual and collective benefits of social participation—either through volunteering or helping relatives and friends—are considerable. For example, in 2010, Canadian volunteers donated nearly 2.07 billion hours to groups and organizations of all kinds, a volume of work equivalent to just under 1.1 million full-time jobs (Crompton and Vézina, 2011). This does not include the many benefits that are more difficult to measure because of their qualitative nature, such as social cohesion, solidarity, and reinforcement of citizenship (Volunteer Canada, 2010).

Governments recognize the importance of volunteer work for community well-being and social development. In addition to offering tax incentives for charitable donations, they employ various measures to promote this type of assistance and to boost the recruitment of volunteers. Through their public programs, they also support and recognize direct assistance or informal social participation, in particular, the care of a sick relative. Employers also contribute to social participation by providing employment benefits.

To give some of your time by volunteering or helping others, you have to have some time to give. However, the people who have more free time are not necessarily the ones who give the most. Studies have shown that other factors, such as level of education, parenthood, the size and diversity of social networks, and religious practice, all had a much greater impact on social participation than hours worked (Musick and Wilson, 2008).

The time factor is nevertheless very important, since having more free time means that volunteers or helpers can spare some more easily. For example, of the people who volunteered in 2010, those aged 65 and over, many of whom are retirees with plenty of time to themselves, contributed the most hours per year on average (Crompton and Vézina, 2011). In addition, some studies have shown that, among volunteers, full-time workers donated fewer hours, on average, than part-time workers (Musick and Wilson, 2008).

In the main working-age population, the 25-to-54 age group, couples with children in which both spouses work are now the rule, rather than the exception. For full-time workers in that age group, volunteering or helping relatives or friends is certainly possible, and many do so on occasion. However, being a volunteer or helper on a regular basis can be difficult.

For many organizations that recruit volunteers, this situation is a challenge, as the hours contributed by workers are often extremely valuable to them. Most full-time workers in this age group are knowledgeable, talented and in excellent physical health. In many cases, they also have extensive experience in a particular field. This is very appealing to organizations, because the type of volunteer work performed by employed people is often related to their job skills and experience (Selby and Reed, 2006). In the current socioeconomic context, where government resources for funding social programs are limited, encouraging citizens to volunteer is a goal that all organizations and levels of government share.

In this article, we look at both formal social participation (volunteering for organizations), as well as informal social participation (helping friends, neighbours or relatives) by full-time workers, aged 25 to 54. What factors might prompt them to make a regular commitment to relatives, friends, groups or organizations, and perhaps donate more hours than they do now? What are the obstacles to their active participation?

We begin with some brief descriptive information comparing social participation by people, aged 25 to 54, as it is with what it was about 20 years ago. We examine whether the increase in full-time employment among women in this age group, and the length of the family work-week (Marshall, 2009) was accompanied by a decrease in daily social participation rates. We also compare the social participation rates of full-time workers with those of part-time workers and of people without paid employment.

Many socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, associated with social participation, have been identified in previous research (Musick and Wilson, 2008; Crompton and Vézina, 2010; Reed and Selby, 2003; Putnam, 2000). In this study, we focus primarily on factors that have received less attention in the past, and that are relevant to workers, such as flexibility of work schedules, working at home, travel-to-work time and employed/self-employed status. Some measures taken by employers to promote employee well-being may encourage volunteering, even if that is not their main purpose.

The data used are largely from the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS) on time use (for more details, see "What you should know about this study"). Some analyses are also based on data from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating – 2010 (CSGVP).

Downward trend in formal social participation

Previous studies reported a decline in Canadians' daily social participation rates over the last few decades (Gaudet, 2010). The most recent data from the GSS on time use show that, despite a slight increase in volunteering compared with 2005, the daily participation rates of people, aged 25 to 54, remained lower in 2010 than they were 20 years ago (Table 1). Specifically, the daily participation rate for people in that age group was 6.1% in 2010. In comparison, it was 8.3% in 1992 (for more details concerning the definition of daily participation rates, see "What you should know about this study"). This decrease was observed among full-time workers, part-time workers, and the unemployed.

The decline in volunteering was more pronounced among women. However, the fact that more women are employed full time does not appear to be behind the decrease in participation. The decline in daily volunteering rates was also seen among women working part time or who were unemployed (Table 1).

Table 1 Social participation by main activity during the previous week, 1992, 1998, 2005 and 2010

	Daily participation rate			
	2010	2005	1998	1992
	percentage			
Formal social participation (volunteering and participation in organizations)				
Total, 25-to-54 age group	6.1	4.9^	7.6^	8.3^
Employed part-time or unemployed†	7.9	6.1^	10.6^	10.4
Employed full-time	5.5*	4.5*^	6.8*^	7.4*^
Men	6.1	4.6^	6.4	7.2
Employed part-time or unemployed†	8.2E	5.4E	7.6E	8.4E
Employed full-time	5.7	4.5^	6.4	7.0
Women	6.1	5.3	8.9^	9.4^
Employed part-time or unemployed†	7.8	6.4	11.7^	11.1^
Employed full-time	5.2*	4.5*	7.4*^	7.9*^
Informal social participation (helping others)				
Total, 25-to-54 age group	6.2	6.0	7.1	7.4^
Employed part-time or unemployed†	8.0	7.6	8.8	9.5
Employed full-time	5.5*	5.4*	6.8*^	6.6*
Men	5.3	4.7	6.0	7.3^
Employed part-time or unemployed†	6.3E	5.2	7.7E	10.8^
Employed full-time	5.1	4.6	5.9	6.7*^
Women	7.1	7.2	8.3	7.5
Employed part-time or unemployed†	8.9	8.6	9.2	9.1
Employed full-tme	6.1*	6.4*	8.1^	6.3

† reference category

* significantly different from the reference category at $p < 0.05$

^ statistically significant difference from 2010 at $p < 0.05$

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Informal social participation (helping people who are not household members) decreased, mostly among men. Between 1992 and 2010, the daily informal participation rate fell from 7.3% to 5.3% for men aged 25 to 54, and remained virtually unchanged for women. In summary, both formal and informal social participation rates were lower in 2010 than in 1998 and in 1992.

About one in five full-time workers volunteered on a regular basis

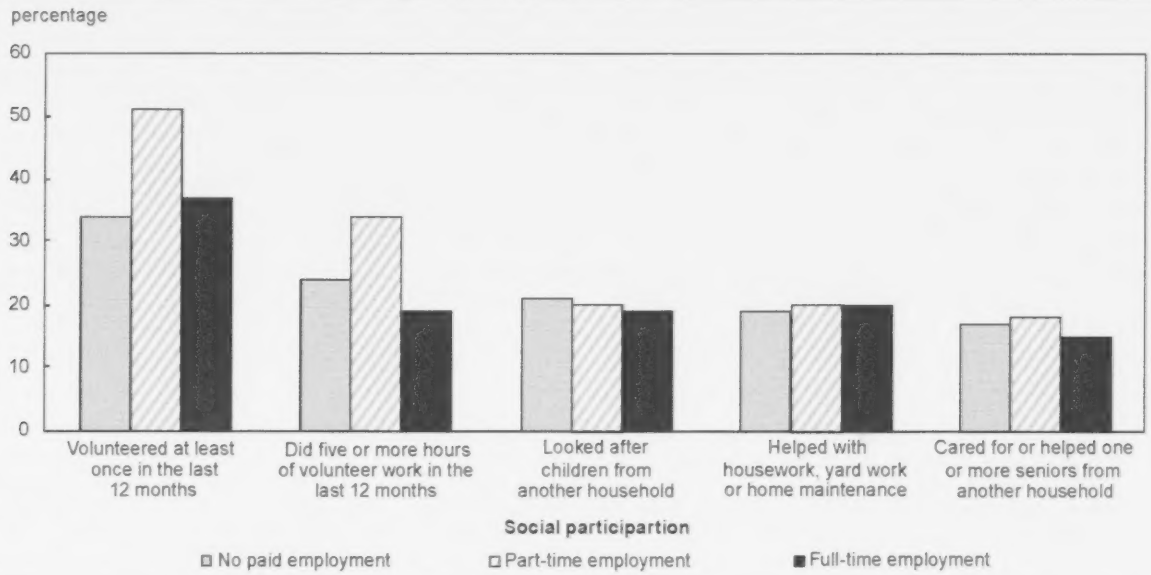
In 2010, 72% of the population, aged 25 to 54, were working full time.[1] The proportion was higher for men than for women (81% and 63% respectively). Among the same age group, 8% were working part time, and 20% were not working.

1. More specifically, 72% of these adults reported working 30 or more hours in the week preceding the interview (all jobs included).

Various studies have shown that workers' rates for volunteering were as high as, and sometimes higher than, the rates for people who had no paid employment (Musick and Wilson, 2008). However, the reference period used to measure participation (formal or informal), i.e., whether it is the past year, the past week or the previous day, can have a major impact on these findings. In general, the longer the reference period (the past year), the higher the participation rates will be.

As is shown in Chart 1, part-time workers had the highest annual volunteering rates, followed by full-time workers and unemployed people. Many of those people may have volunteered only very occasionally during the past year and, in some cases, just once.

Chart 1 Formal and informal social participation of people aged 25 to 54, by main activity, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

For regular volunteering, the situation was different. We can consider people who did an average of five or more hours of volunteer work per month in the past year as regular volunteers. In 2010, 34% of part-time workers, aged 25 to 54, could be considered regular volunteers, compared with 24% of the unemployed[2] and with only 19% of full-time workers. These results support the idea that working full time does not limit volunteering on an occasional basis (or on an annual basis), but is associated with a decreased likelihood of regular volunteering.

We see a similar picture when we look at daily volunteering rates (Table 1). In 1992, 1998, 2005, and 2010, people whose main activity was full-time employment had lower daily participation rates than others (unemployed people or part-time workers). For example, in 2010, the daily volunteering rate was 5.5% for full-time workers, compared with 7.9% for others.

With regard to helping friends, relatives or neighbours, full-time workers were slightly less likely than unemployed people to have helped look after children, from another household, during the previous week (Chart 1). Daily informal participation rates were also lower for those, whose main activity was full-time employment, than for others (Table 1).

The rest of the article deals mostly with the factors associated with regular volunteering and informal social participation by full-time workers.

Flexibility of working conditions and volunteering

Recognizing that a busy, inflexible schedule can make social participation difficult, many employers have policies and programs to facilitate and encourage volunteering by their employees. For example, a recent Statistics Canada study showed that, among employees, volunteers who could count on their employer's support donated more hours, on average, than volunteers who did not have such support from their employer (Hurst, 2012).

2. Note that among the unemployed, women were more likely to be regular volunteers (26%) than men (19%). An earlier study by Ravanera et al. (2002) also showed higher participation among unemployed women than among unemployed men. See also US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003.

Various non-wage benefits that employers offer their employees, such as the option to work at home, or to choose their start and finish times, are intended primarily to retain the best workers and attract high-quality employees (by improving their work-life balance and their job satisfaction, in general). It is, nevertheless, possible that those benefits indirectly encourage volunteering by employees. This is partly supported by the data.

In 2010, 26% of full-time workers who worked at home, at least occasionally were regular volunteers, compared with 18% of people who never worked at home (Table 2). In addition, workers who were able to choose their start and finish times (i.e., workers who had flexible work schedules) were more likely to be regular volunteers than those who had to adhere to a schedule set by the employer (22% and 18% respectively). Having both options appeared to be even more favourable: 27% of those who were able to choose their schedule, and work at home, were regular volunteers, compared with 17% of those who had fixed schedules and never worked at home.

Although there appears to be a relationship between volunteering and flexibility of working conditions, it is important to note that workers who enjoy such measures are different in a number of respects from those who have to adhere to schedules set by the employer, and who cannot work at home. For example, they are generally more highly educated, a key factor in volunteering. To verify that the result is robust, we performed logistic regression modelling, which took into account age, sex, level of education, whether the worker was a parent of school-age children, religiosity, and other factors identified in previous studies as being strongly correlated with volunteering.

Table 2 Social participation of full-time workers, aged 25 to 54, 2010

		Formal social participation		Informal social participation			
	Distribution of the population	Volunteered at least once in the last 12 months	Did 5 or more hours of volunteer work per month in the last 12 months	Looked after children from another household	Helped with housework, yard work or home maintenance (last week)	Cared for or helped one or more seniors from another household (last week)	Helped a neighbour in the past month
	distribution	percentage					
Working at home							
No†	78	35	18	18	19	15	66
Yes	22	44*	26*	19	21	17	74*
Flexible work schedule							
No†	58	34	18	19	20	15	67
Yes	42	42*	22*	18	19	16	69
Flexible work arrangements							
No†	52	33	17	19	20	14	66
Telework or flexible work schedule	33	41*	20	17	19	17	68
Telework and flexible work schedule	15	45*	27*	19	20	16	73*
Hours of work per week							
30 to 39 hours†	25	38	19	19	17	17	64
40 to 49 hours	46	35	19	18	20	14*	66
50 hours or more	29	40	21	18	22*	15	74*
Commute to work							
Less than 30 minutes†	62	39	21	20	21	16	68
30-44 minutes	19	36	19	20	20	17	69
45 minutes or more	18	34	15*	14*	18	13	64
Employment status							
Paid worker†	85	36	19	19	19	15	67
Self-employed	15	43*	25*	18	21	17	74*
Industry							
Agriculture, forestry, fishing; Mining, oil and gas extraction	4	47	28	18E	25*	16E	81*
Utilities; Transportation and warehousing	7	29*	17	20	23*	21*	71*
Construction; Manufacturing; Trade	32	31*	16*	18	21*	14	69*
Finance and insurance; Real estate and rental and leasing; Professional, scientific and technical services†	16	42	22	16	13	13	63

Table 2 Social participation of full-time workers, aged 25 to 54, 2010 (continued)

		Formal social participation		Informal social participation			
	Distribution of the population	Volunteered at least once in the last 12 months	Did 5 or more hours of volunteer work per month in the last 12 months	Looked after children from another household	Helped with housework, yard work or home maintenance (last week)	Cared for or helped one or more seniors from another household (last week)	Helped a neighbour in the past month
	distribution	percentage					
Accommodation and food services; Other services	10	31*	17	17	19*	13	65
Educational services; Health care and social assistance; Information, culture and recreation	24	45	24	22*	21*	19*	67
Public administration	7	44	20	15	18	16	70*
Spouse's employment situation							
No spouse†	24	30	15	18	21	13	58
Spouse not working	19	37*	18	17	23	12	70*
Spouse working	57	41*	22*	19	18	17*	71*
Sex							
Male†	58	36	19	17	22	14	72
Female	42	39	20	20*	16*	17*	62*
Age							
25 to 34†	29	31	15	17	23	8	63
35 to 44	33	40*	22*	21*	17*	12*	70*
45 to 54	38	40*	21*	17	19*	24*	69*
Parent of school-aged children							
No†	58	32	16	15	21	14	64
1 child	20	38*	20*	22*	17*	17	70*
2 or more children	21	52*	30*	26*	18	17*	76*
Religious practice							
At least once a week†	13	58	38	17	22	17	65
Not every week but, at least, once a year	42	41*	20*	21	23	17	73*
None	45	28*	14*	17	16*	13	64
Highest level of schooling							
Secondary school or less†	31	31	17	21	21	17	68
Trade school, college	34	34	17	18	23	16	69
University degree	35	47*	24*	16*	15*	13*	66
Region							
Atlantic	6	42	24*	22	26	18*	71
Quebec	24	28*	13*	20	11*	18	61*
Ontario†	39	38	19	18	22	14	71
Prairies	7	45*	23	19	20	15	70
Alberta	12	45*	23	15*	20	13	72
British Columbia	12	39	25*	18	24	16	63*
Time living in Canada							
Born in Canada†	79	39	20	19	21	16	70
Less than 15 years	10	28*	12 E*	12*	12*	6 E*	60*
15 years or more (but born in another country)	11	36	20	18	17	17	63*
Knowing people in the neighbourhood							
A few or none†	59	32	15	16	18	14	58
Many or most	41	45*	26*	22*	23*	18*	82*

† reference category

* significantly different from the reference category at $p < 0.05$

Source : Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

According to this analysis, workers who have a flexible schedule and who worked at home, at least occasionally, remained, when all other factors were considered, more likely to be regular volunteers (predicted probability 6 percentage points higher than workers who had fixed schedules and never worked at home) (Table 3).

Table 3 Logistic regressions of factors associated with formal and informal social participation, predicted probabilities and marginal effects, 2010

	Regular volunteering		Looked after children from another household		Helped with housework, yard work or home maintenance (last week)		Cared for or helped one or more seniors from another household (last week)		Helped a neighbour in the past month	
	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect
Flexible work arrangements										
No	0.15	ref.	0.18	ref.	0.17	ref.	0.12	ref.	0.69	ref.
Flexible schedule or work at home	0.17	0.02	0.17	-0.00	0.19	0.02	0.15	0.03*	0.70	0.00
Flexible schedule and work at home	0.21	0.06*	0.19	0.01	0.19	0.02	0.13	0.01	0.73	0.03
Hours of work per week										
30-39 hours	0.17	ref.	0.16	ref.	0.17	ref.	0.13	ref.	0.69	ref.
40-49 hours	0.17	-0.01	0.18	0.02	0.18	0.01	0.13	-0.00	0.69	0.00
50 hours or more	0.17	-0.01	0.18	0.02	0.19	0.01	0.14	0.01	0.73	0.04
Employment status										
Paid worker	0.16	ref.	0.18	ref.	0.18	ref.	0.13	ref.	0.70	ref.
Self-employed	0.18	0.02	0.16	-0.02	0.18	0.00	0.14	0.01	0.70	0.00
Commute to work										
Less than 30 minutes	0.18	ref.	0.18	ref.	0.18	ref.	0.13	ref.	0.70	ref.
30-44 minutes	0.17	-0.01	0.20	0.01	0.19	0.00	0.14	0.01	0.74	0.04
45 minutes or more	0.14	-0.04*	0.14	-0.04	0.16	-0.02	0.12	-0.02	0.67	-0.02
Industry										
Agriculture, forestry, fishing; Mining and oil and gas extraction	0.23	0.04	0.15	-0.07	0.18	-0.03	0.13	-0.03	0.73	0.01
Utilities; Transportation and warehousing	0.16	-0.03	0.20	-0.02	0.21	-0.01	0.18	0.01	0.73	0.00
Construction; Manufacturing; Trade	0.15	-0.05*	0.16	-0.06	0.19	-0.02	0.11	-0.05*	0.70	-0.02
Finance and insurance; Real estate and rental and leasing; Professional, scientific and technical services	0.18	-0.01	0.17	-0.05	0.13	-0.08 *	0.12	-0.05	0.64	-0.08*
Accommodation and food services; Other services	0.14	-0.05	0.16	-0.06*	0.16	-0.05	0.11	-0.05	0.68	-0.05
Educational services; Health care and social assistance; Information, culture and recreation	0.19	ref.	0.22	ref.	0.21	ref.	0.17	ref.	0.72	ref.
Public administration	0.17	-0.01	0.14	-0.04	0.18	0.05	0.13	0.01	0.72	0.08
Spouse's employment situation										
No spouse	0.16	ref.	0.19	ref.	0.19	ref.	0.12	ref.	0.63	ref.
Spouse not working	0.15	-0.01	0.17	-0.02	0.19	0.00	0.12	0.00	0.70	0.07*
Spouse working	0.18	0.02	0.18	-0.01	0.17	-0.02	0.14	0.02	0.73	0.09*
Sex										
Male	0.17	ref.	0.17	ref.	0.21	ref.	0.12	ref.	0.74	ref.
Female	0.16	-0.00	0.19	0.02	0.15	-0.06	0.15	0.03*	0.64	-0.10*
Age										
25 to 34	0.15	ref.	0.19	ref.	0.22	ref.	0.08	ref.	0.69	ref.
35 to 44	0.18	0.02*	0.19	0.00	0.17	-0.05	0.12	0.03*	0.72	0.02
45 to 54	0.17	0.02	0.16	-0.03	0.17	-0.05	0.21	0.12*	0.69	0.00
Parent of school-age children										
No	0.14	ref.	0.14	ref.	0.19	ref.	0.13	ref.	0.69	ref.
1 child	0.17	0.02*	0.22	0.07*	0.16	-0.03	0.13	0.01	0.70	0.01
2 or more children	0.25	0.10*	0.25	0.10*	0.17	-0.02	0.13	0.01	0.73	0.04

Table 3 Logistic regressions of factors associated with formal and informal social participation, predicted probabilities and marginal effects, 2010 (continued)

	Regular volunteering		Looked after children from another household		Helped with housework, yard work or home maintenance (last week)		Cared for or helped one or more seniors from another household (last week)		Helped a neighbour in the past month	
	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect	predicted probability	marginal effect
Religious practice										
At least once a week	0.38	ref.	0.17	ref.	0.22	ref.	0.16	ref.	0.67	ref.
Not every week but at least once a year	0.17	-0.21*	0.20	0.03	0.21	-0.01	0.15	-0.01	0.74	0.07*
None	0.13	-0.26*	0.16	-0.01	0.15	-0.08	0.11	-0.04*	0.67	-0.00
Highest level of schooling										
Secondary school or less	0.15	ref.	0.21	ref.	0.19	ref.	0.15	ref.	0.70	ref.
Trade school, college	0.15	-0.00	0.17	-0.04	0.22	0.03*	0.13	-0.01	0.71	0.02
University degree	0.21	0.06*	0.15	-0.06	0.15	-0.04*	0.12	-0.03*	0.69	-0.00
Region										
Rest of Canada	0.19	ref.	0.17	ref.	0.21	ref.	0.12	ref.	0.72	ref.
Quebec	0.12	-0.07*	0.20	0.03	0.10	-0.11	0.16	0.04*	0.62	-0.11*
Time living in Canada										
Born in Canada	0.19	ref.	0.18	ref.	0.20	ref.	0.14	ref.	0.71	ref.
Less than 15 years	0.06	-0.13*	0.13	-0.06	0.11	-0.08	0.06	-0.08*	0.64	-0.07*
15 years or more (but born in another country)	0.14	-0.05	0.19	0.00	0.16	-0.04	0.14	-0.00	0.66	-0.06
Knowing people in the neighbourhood										
A few or none	0.14	ref.	0.16	ref.	0.16	ref.	0.13	ref.	0.60	ref.
Many or most	0.21	0.07*	0.20	0.04*	0.21	0.04*	0.14	0.01	0.82	0.22*

* significantly different from the reference category (ref.) at $p < 0.05$

Source : Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Female workers with flexible working conditions more likely to help seniors

To meet some needs of the elderly, such as assistance with transportation, the helper must be available during the day. Among female workers, there was a positive relationship between having at least some degree of flexibility and the likelihood of having provided care or assistance to a senior living in another household. Specifically, 23% of female full-time workers who had flexible work schedules and worked at home, at least occasionally, had cared for a senior citizen the previous week (compared with 15% of those who had neither option). However, men who had flexible working conditions were not more likely to help seniors.

Men were generally more likely than women to help non-household members with housework, yard work, or home maintenance. Similar to previous cases, having a flexible work schedule and working at home, at least occasionally, increased the likelihood of having done this kind of work for relatives, or friends or acquaintances, but only among women.

Hours worked not associated with social participation

We know that full-time workers are less likely than part-time workers to be regular volunteers (Chart 1). Nevertheless, among full-time workers, hours worked is not directly associated with formal or informal social participation. With all other factors kept constant, people who worked 50 or more hours a week were just as likely to be regular volunteers or to provide assistance to others as people who worked between 30 and 39 hours a week. According to some researchers, working long hours is not necessarily an obstacle to volunteering. The freedom of workers to choose their work periods, within certain limits, has a much more significant impact (Musick and Wilson, 2008, p. 167).

One might assume that full-time workers, whose spouse also works, are less likely to volunteer, since they have more time constraints related to unpaid work. This is not the case, however; having or not having a spouse who works is not related to formal or informal social participation. On the contrary, we find that workers who have spouses (whether they work or not) were more likely to have helped a neighbour in the past month (Table 3). People with spouses may be more likely than single people to learn that a neighbour needs help. Finally, having a normal day shift or schedule, rather than another type of schedule, had no effect on social participation (data not shown).

Commute time negatively associated with participation

Workers who spend more time commuting to work are, on average, more likely to describe most of their days as stressful, and say they are less satisfied with their work-family life balance (Turcotte, 2010). This relationship can also be observed in a set of measures of stress related to lack of time. For example, the longer the commute to work, the more likely workers are to reduce their sleep hours when they are short of time, the more likely they are to feel trapped in a daily routine, the more worried they are about not spending enough time with family and friends, and so on. Is there also a connection with social participation?

In his classic study of civic engagement in the United States, Robert Putnam (2000) identified urban sprawl and its impact on the increase in commuting distances and car travel times, as factors that have contributed to the decline in social capital observed since the 1950s. The results of our analysis point to the same conclusion: 21% of workers who took less than 30 minutes to get to work were regular volunteers, compared with 15% of those whose commute took 45 minutes or more (Table 2). When all other factors were kept constant, the results were the same: workers who spent more time commuting were less likely to be regular volunteers (Table 3).

Informal participation by female workers (but not male workers) may also be associated with travel time. Among female full-time workers whose commute was less than 30 minutes, 22% had looked after children from another household the previous week. For women who took 45 minutes or more to get to work, the proportion was just 12%. The difference remained statistically significant when all other factors were kept constant.

Female self-employed workers more likely to be regular volunteers

About 85% of full-time workers, aged 25 to 54, are employees, and 15% are self-employed. When other factors were ignored, self-employed workers were more likely than employees to be regular volunteers (25% versus 19%) (Table 2). However, the difference vanished completely when all factors were included in the analysis (Table 3).[3]

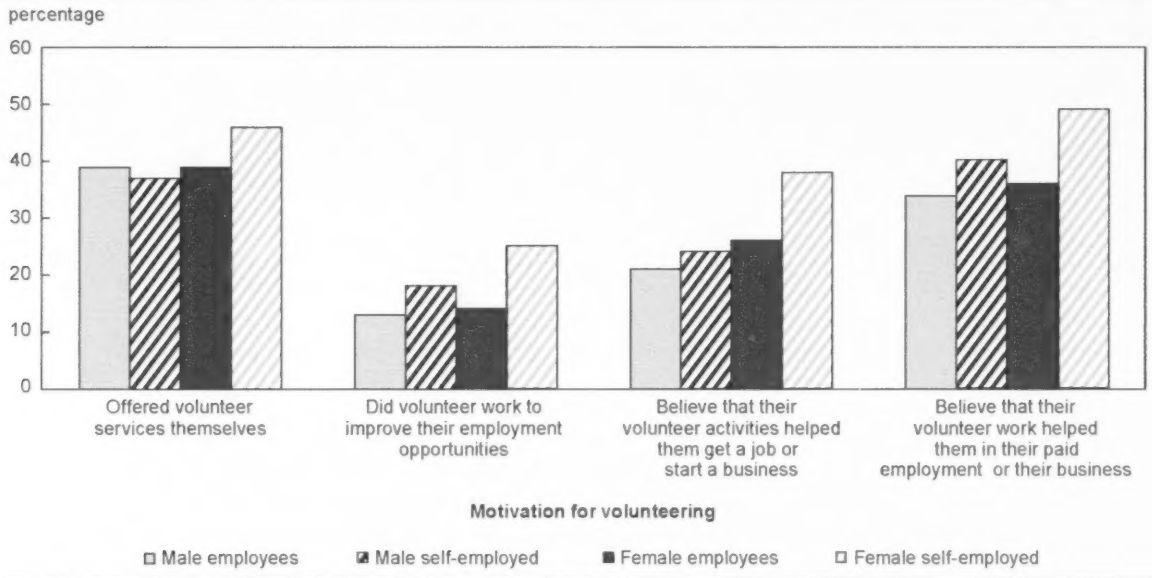
This result conceals some much larger differences among women than among men with respect to class of worker. About 35% of female self-employed workers were regular volunteers, compared with just 19% of female employees. For men, the proportions were 21% and 19% respectively. When the other variables remained constant, the difference between the two classes of worker was still statistically significant for women.[4]

It is possible that female self-employed workers are asked more often to volunteer than female employees. They may also have different motives for volunteering than female employees and male workers in general. A number of results from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating – 2010 (CSGVP) suggests that this might be the case. First, female self-employed workers were more likely than female and male employees, and male self-employed workers, to report that they had offered to do volunteer work (Chart 2). That appears to indicate greater intrinsic motivation to volunteer. A number of studies have shown that the majority of people volunteered because they were asked to do so (Musick and Wilson, 2008).

In addition, female self-employed workers had a greater tendency to make a connection between their employment activities and their volunteer activities. For example, they were more likely (1) to say that one of the major reasons for volunteering was to improve their employment opportunities; (2) to report that their volunteer work had helped them get a job or start a business; and (3) to believe that their volunteer work had helped them in their employment or business.

3. At least one other study has shown that self-employed workers, who depend heavily on developing and maintaining good professional networks, were more likely to volunteer than employees (Lamb, 2011). Unlike the present study, however, that study did not control for flexibility of working conditions., as is the case in the present study. In general, self-employed workers have more control over their work arrangements than employees.
4. Adding a class-of-worker/sex interaction term to the base model showed that female, self-employed workers were more likely than female employees to be regular volunteers (difference of 9 percentage points) (data not shown).

Chart 2 Female self-employed workers more likely to make a connection between their volunteer activity and their employment activity



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Volunteering rates similar across industries

It is possible that having a job in some sectors facilitates regular volunteering in other sectors. For example, according to the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating – 2010 (CSGVP), workers' volunteering rates were above average in (1) educational services; (2) the information and cultural industries and arts, entertainment and recreation; and (3) public administration and utilities (Hurst, 2012).

The results of this study confirm that workers in the educational services, health care and social assistance, and information, culture and recreation sectors were more likely to be active volunteers than workers in the construction, manufacturing and trade sectors (rate 5 percentage points higher when the other factors are kept constant) (Table 3). However, in general, there were few differences between industries once all factors were taken into account.

In terms of informal participation—helping with housework, helping seniors, helping neighbours—), we observed lower rates for workers in the finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing sector, as well as for workers in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector.

Other factors associated with formal social participation

In 2010, 13% of full-time workers attended religious services on a weekly basis. These workers are very different from all other workers in the area of formal and even informal social participation. Of all the factors considered, it is by far the one most strongly associated with volunteering (their likelihood of being a regular volunteer is 26 percentage points higher than that of workers who never attend religious services, taking into account all other factors).

Full-time workers, who are parents of two or more school-age children, were more likely than workers with no children to be regular volunteers (10 percentage points higher) (Table 3). They were also more likely to have donated their time to looking after children from other households. These results may be important with regard to longer-term social participation. One factor that strongly influences volunteering is having seen one's parents volunteer during childhood and adolescence (Hall et al., 2009; Hart et al., 1998).

Other factors positively associated with regular volunteering include having a university degree, knowing many or most of one's neighbours,[5] and being between 35 and 44 years of age. Factors negatively associated with regular volunteering were living in Quebec, being born in another country, and living in Canada for less than 15 years. For informal social participation, the effect of the various factors varied with the type of assistance.

Conclusion

Social participation by Canadians, aged 25 to 54, both formal (volunteering) and informal (helping others), is lower than it was in the early 1990s. For women in this age group, formal social participation rates have declined, while informal social participation rates have remained relatively steady. For men, only assistance to relatives, friends and neighbours decreased during the period.

In the 25-to-54 age group, full-time workers are less likely than part-time workers and unemployed people to be regular volunteers. In 2010, 34% of part-time workers, aged 25 to 54, could be considered regular volunteers, compared with 24% of the unemployed and only 19% of full-time workers. With regard to informal social participation, full-time workers, aged 25 to 54, were a little less likely to have cared for, or helped, seniors from other households. However, there was no difference in terms of child care or assistance with housework.

Volunteering by full-time workers may be facilitated by various factors. Workers who had flexible schedules, and who worked at home at least occasionally, were more likely to be regular volunteers (26%) than workers who had a fixed schedule and never worked at home (18%). The difference between these two groups was smaller, but still significant when we controlled the effects of many factors typically associated with volunteering, such as level of education, parenthood, religious practice and social networks.

Flexibility of working conditions (schedule and work at home) was associated with helping seniors, but only for women. Specifically, 23% of female, full-time workers, who had flexible work schedules and worked at home, had cared for or helped an elderly person, compared with 15% of those who had a fixed schedule and never worked at home.

Among full-time workers, aged 25 to 54, working long hours on a weekly basis was not associated with a decrease in the regular volunteering rate. However, workers who spent more time commuting were less likely to be regular volunteers. Commuting times had little effect on informal social participation, except in one case: female workers, who spent more time getting to work, were less likely to have looked after one or more children from another household.

Female self-employed workers were appreciably more likely to volunteer on a regular basis than male self-employed workers, and male and female employees. The self-employed appeared to be more motivated to do volunteer work than the other classes of worker: they were more likely to have offered their services (rather than to have responded positively to a request to volunteer). There was little correlation between regular volunteering and sector of employment or with having or not having a spouse who works.

Future studies of volunteering by full-time workers could flesh out some of the results presented in this article. For example, it would be interesting to determine whether the measures that employers use to facilitate volunteering have an impact on the likelihood of being a regular volunteer, after the other factors measured here have been taken into account.[6] It would also be interesting to analyze whether the participation factors identified in this study are more strongly correlated with some types of volunteering than with others (fundraising rather than serving as a board member, organizing events and so on). Finally, it would be useful to examine whether flexibility of working conditions has a greater effect on participation in some types of organizations than others (charitable, political, professional, recreational, religious, etc.).

At the time of writing, ***Martin Turcotte*** *was a senior analyst in Statistics Canada's Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division.* ***Stéphanie Gaudet*** *is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Ottawa.*

5. This indicator is used as an indirect measure of the size of social networks. People with more highly developed networks are more likely to be asked to volunteer, or simply to help a relative, friend or acquaintance.
6. This information was not available in the 2010 General Social Survey on time use.

Reasons for not volunteering or for not volunteering more

In the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating – 2010 (CSGVP), non-volunteers were asked to indicate the reasons for not having donated their time during the year (volunteers were asked why they did not give more hours). The results show how time constraints can make regular volunteering difficult for full-time workers, aged 25 to 54.

For example, 84% of non-volunteers, who worked full time, said that they did not volunteer in the past year because they did not have the time. By comparison, this reason was cited by 71% of part-time workers and 53% of unemployed people.

Among volunteers who were asked why they did not give more hours than they had during the previous year, there were substantial differences between full-time workers and part-time workers, or the unemployed. Full-time workers rarely reported that they were prevented, by health problems, from volunteering more (10%, compared with 31% of unemployed people), by the costs of volunteering, or by not knowing how to get involved. On the other hand, lack of time seemed to be a more important factor. Like non-volunteers, full-time workers who volunteered were more likely to say that they did not have the time to give more hours than they had given (84% of them, compared with 66% of unemployed people).

What you should know about this study

This study is based on data from the 2010 General Social Survey on time use. In the first section, we looked at data from previous cycles of the same survey: 1992, 1998 and 2005. The 2010 survey was administered to a sample of people, aged 15 and older, totalling 15,390 respondents. Of those, 7,345 respondents, aged 25 to 54, were selected.

Analysis of the factors associated with social participation is limited to the 4,495 respondents, aged 25 to 54, whose main activity was paid employment or self-employment, and who had spent at least 30 hours doing this activity the previous week.

Definitions

In this study, we use various measures of social participation. Formal social participation refers to volunteer activities on behalf of an organization (charity, school, etc.). Informal social participation refers to various forms of assistance provided to people who do not live in the same household as the respondent.

Daily social participation rate

Daily participation rates are measured with time use data. In this type of survey, respondents are asked to list all the activities they were doing on the reference day (the day before the interview). With the list of all daily activities, we created two variables corresponding to the theoretical distinctions between volunteering, or formal participation in an organization, and helping others, or informal participation in primary and secondary networks outside one's home. The formal and informal social participation rates correspond to the proportion of respondents who spent time volunteering or helping others during their reference day. This method is used to measure changes in trends over time.

Volunteering rate

The proportion of people who volunteered, on behalf of an organization, in the last 12 months.

Regular volunteering rate

The proportion of people who, for the past year, did an average of five or more hours of volunteer work per month. This measure is preferred over the daily rates because it identifies people who do a great deal of volunteering, but had not done any on the particular day for which they had to report their time use (daily social participation rates method).

Logistic regressions

The results of the logistic regression models in the appendix are presented in the form of marginal effects. They indicate the increase or decrease in the likelihood of an individual with a given characteristic, being a regular volunteer , when all other factors are kept at their average value.

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